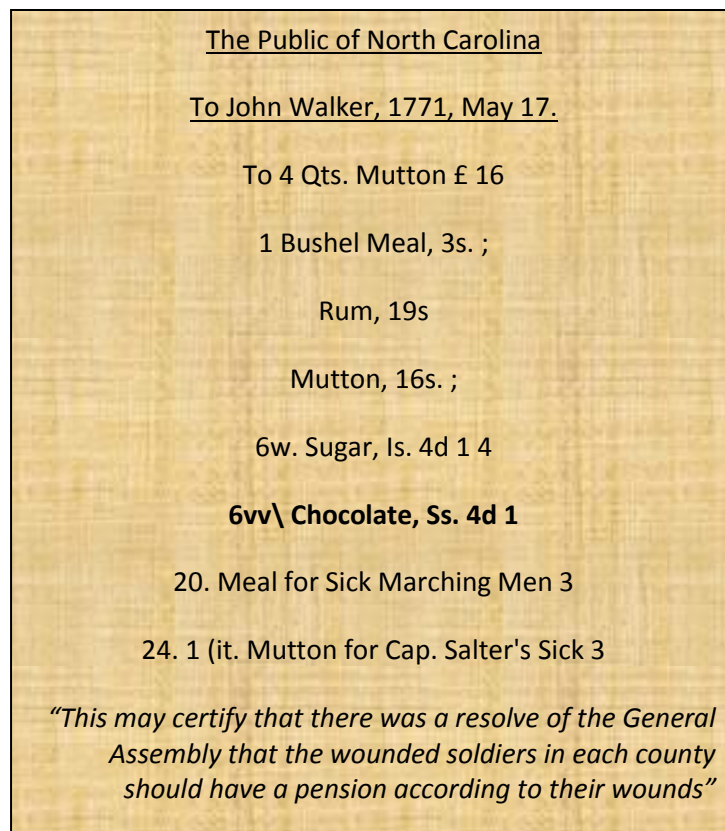


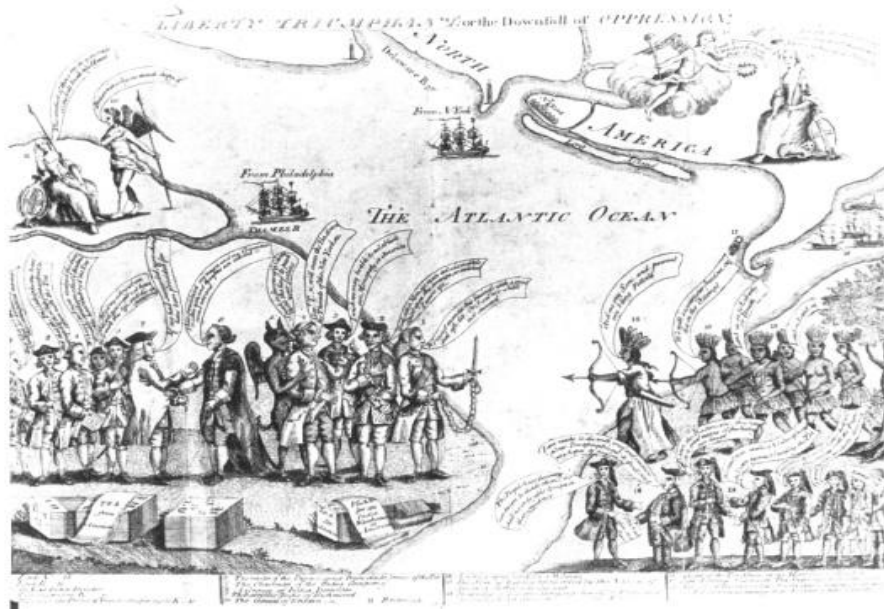
**Chocolate at the Hermitage**  
**By**  
**Ashley Bouknight, Curatorial Assistant**

America's love of chocolate is not a new phenomenon. Cultures across the globe have partaken in its consumption for many centuries. Since the first arrival of chocolate in the United States in the early 1700s, individuals from various backgrounds enjoyed this treat in the form of a hot beverage as the edible form was not created until the late 1840s. From mill workers to farm hands to wealthy aristocrats, chocolate had become a delicacy for the major part of the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. As this treat was so popular, it is no surprise that some of its most avid lovers were also Presidents. Presidents such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson spoke fondly of chocolate drinks and even commissioned personal chocolate pots for their homes. As President, it is almost certain that Andrew Jackson too consumed chocolate both at the White House and in his home at The Hermitage.

President Jackson's earliest encounters with chocolate may have been in the late 1700s during the Revolutionary War as it was often included in the soldiers' rations. As a soldier in a regiment located in the Carolinas, Jackson would have encountered chocolate at some point during the war.



*Sample pension rations for a soldier in North Carolina  
The State Records of North Carolina, December 1773*



"Liberty Triumphant", Cartoon engraving

*In 1767, Great Britain enacted the Townshend Acts on the American colonies, including a tax on tea. Therefore, the colonists boycotted tea and made the consumption of coffee and chocolate patriotic.*

While Jackson was a law student in North Carolina, he worked in a general store to supplement his income. As he labored daily to fashion himself after the elite of high society, he would have been aware of the popular foods of the time and would have often seen these items on the general store shelves. Once owning his own set of general stores, it is noted that Jackson made sure to stock his shelves with the "latest fashions and merchandise from around the world" and "made many buying trips to major cities such as Baltimore... and Philadelphia, then the U.S. capital." Philadelphia was the capital of United States at the time and also the second largest chocolate manufacturing city behind Boston.

|   |                    |       |         |
|---|--------------------|-------|---------|
| <p>Big Table Spoons w/ 4f --- 8</p> <p>Black Rob Dr 3/4 1/2 linen 6f --- 10</p> <p>32 Bag Large Buttons 6f --- 17</p> <p>James Boyd Dr 1/2 lb Chocolate 5f --- 17</p> <p>5f 3/4 Realico w/ 11f --- 3</p> <p>--- 11 2</p> <p>Coffee 5f --- 7</p> |                    |       |         |
| Elisha Rice   | Dr. W wife         | @ 12/ |         |
| for 3 1/4 lb Tea Kettles  |                    | @ 6/  |         |
| 7 lb Loaf Sugar   |                    | @ 22/ |         |
| 10 1/2 yds Black Silk   |                    |       |         |
| 4 1/4 yds Durant  |                    |       |         |
| 1 P Shoes   |                    |       |         |
| 3 3/4 yds Calico  |                    |       |         |
| 2 yds Corded Muslin   |                    |       |         |
| 1 1/2 yds Muslin  |                    |       |         |
| 3 Doz Needles   |                    |       |         |
| 2 pen Knives  |                    |       |         |
| 1 do do   |                    |       |         |
| 1 lb pepper   |                    | @     |         |
| 1 lb Chocolate  |                    | @     |         |
| [Nashville, August] Jan [1793]  |                    |       |         |
| Wm. T Lewis   | Dr. Thos. Crutcher | @ 4/  |         |
| 3 quire paper   |                    |       |         |
| Ann Hay   | Dr.                | @     | .. 5..  |
| for 1 lb Chocolate  |                    |       | .. 12.. |
| 1/2 lb Hyson Tea  |                    |       |         |

Receipts from President Jackson's account books, from *The Andrew Jackson Papers*

*Chocolate manufacturing became a booming industry in the Northeast regions of the United States with the southern regions being its primary consumers. With the rise in manufactured chocolate, it became a popular staple on store shelves across the country. Chocolate was highly sought after by the wealthy as it was considered a luxury item of the time.*

Throughout Jackson's presidency, he expresses his admiration for French culture which was considered very popular in high society at the time. His love of French decor was incorporated at the White House during the renovations projects of the 1830s. After the Hermitage was severely damaged by fire in 1834, the mansion was remodeled with some the same design elements that were added to the White House and much of the new furniture, accessories, and wallpaper was either French or French inspired.



*Two ornate vases and a section of wallpaper that were produced in France*

During his second term, Jackson appointed a new White House steward and European chef, Joseph Boulanger. Boulanger purchased a dozen chocolate cups, some of the first pieces of china purchased after he was hired, as chocolate was often used in French cooking.



*White porcelain ramekins purchased during Jackson's Administration that may have been used as chocolate cups*

After returning to the Hermitage, Jackson required those in charge of cooking to learn French culinary methods. One of Jackson's favorite desserts was said to be a French dish called Blanc Mange. This sweet gelatin-type dessert was usually served cold after it had set and chilled in pudding molds. Early forms of this recipe are listed as almond flavored, but many of the recipes printed during the mid to late 1800s included the newly manufactured chocolate.



*Pudding molds located in  
The Hermitage kitchen*

**CHOCOLATE, *Blancmange* of.\*** — Dissolve a quarter of a pound of good chocolate, and the same of sugar, in a glass of boiling water: extract the milk of almonds in the usual way, and having divided it, mix with one half of the chocolate, four drachms of isinglass, and with the other, six ounces of sugar dissolved in a glass of warm water, and four drachms of isinglass. Proceed with the rest of the operation as in *Blancmange of Cedrat*.

*Recipe from an 1830's cookbook*

Various sets of hot beverage cups can be found in the Hermitage collection today. Based on their dates of production, their materials, and the evolution of chocolate serving sets, it can be inferred that what were once deemed coffee or tea pots/cups could have actually been used for the consumption of chocolate!



*A Chocolate cup and three coffee cups from a serving set produced in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century*





*During the early periods of chocolate pot manufacturing, chocolate pots were given wooden handles to distinguish them from coffee or tea pots. Over time, the pots have become almost indistinguishable from each other but some of their distinct features still remain. The pot on the left is from The Hermitage Collection and labeled “teapot”. However, it bears a striking resemblance to the European chocolate pot on the right.*

References for this article include *Chocolate: History, Culture, and Heritage* and the website for the American Heritage Chocolate Division of MARS, Incorporated. Their chocolate, [American Heritage Chocolate](#), produced from a colonial recipe can be purchased in The Hermitage Gift Shop.

